



Penistone Grammar School Advanced Learning Centre Never Stop Flying

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Achieving Excellence through a Values Driven Education

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Dear Parents and Carers

Considering how relatively short the Spring term has been, I cannot believe how much has happened at Penistone!

There have been so many fantastic experiences squeezed into the last 10 weeks for our students that I cannot possibly capture them all. However, highlights have included additional enrichment opportunities both within and beyond the classroom; sporting success for our school teams; new reward initiatives to The Deep and Xscape; globe-trotting to different countries with skiing in Italy and site-seeing in New York, all culminating in our students and staff rubbing shoulders with Hollywood royalty, when Sir Ian McKellen delivered an inspirational speech in the penultimate week of term.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who have worked hard, many giving up their own time, to organise these amazing events. We will be publishing details (including photographs) from the different activities on our website shortly, please do take a look and see if you can spot your son or daughter.

When accessing our website over the coming weeks you may notice some changes as we have moved over to a new provider. This is to improve the look, functionality and usability of the website, particularly on mobile devices. Our website address remains unchanged: www.penistone-gs.uk, however you may find some pages missing or unavailable as we work to transfer content across. We thank you in advance for your patience; should you need any information regarding the website please contact our Reception Team via email at enquiries@penistone-gs.uk.

As Principal, I find myself full of pride most days, seeing our students strive to be the best version of themselves they can be. I am particularly proud of the commitment and dedication our 'Class of 2018' are consistently showing as they prepare for their exams. As I sit writing this letter to you, even though school has officially broken for the holidays, it remains a hive of activity. This week and into next week staff are holding targeted extra revision and study sessions for our year 11 and year 13 students. In addition, we have sent out an open invitation to any student who would like to come in to school and study independently. There have been over 80 students in attendance every day so far and I cannot wait to see our young people reap the rewards of their hard work when they open their examination results envelopes in the summer.

As we approach the final term of the 2018/19 academic year, we are already planning for September and I look forward to sharing information regarding our school improvement priorities for the new year with you all over the coming weeks.

As part of this, we have three opportunities for parents to get involved in shaping school improvement initiatives:

1) School Uniform

To ensure that we are offering you the best value for money and highest levels of service in respect of our school uniform, we have invited quotations from our existing and new, local uniform suppliers. We would value parental input into the final decision-making process and as a result, have the

opportunity for two parents to be involved in assessing the quotations with us. If you are interested in being involved, please email Julie Galvin at finance@penistone-gs.uk before Wednesday 11 March 2018.

2) Anti-Bullying

At Penistone, bullying in any form is unacceptable. We have introduced many new measures to combat bullying and to improve the way in which we deal with bullying if it arises. It would appear from the results of our 2017 Parent Survey however; that parents believe this is still an area for improvement. We are committed to addressing any concerns you may have and would like to invite you to be part of a working group focusing on improving parental perception in this key area. If you would like to be involved, or would like further information regarding this, please email enquiries@penistone-gs.uk marking the subject of your email “**Anti-Bullying Parent Working Group**”.

3) Year 8

The results of the 2017 Parent Survey were once again very positive but as you are aware, I am absolutely committed to making Penistone Grammar School a truly excellent school for all our young people. To this end, parents in year 8 feel there may be some work to do to improve the experience for their children. We are keen to understand more about this and are therefore inviting year 8 parents to be involved in a focus group, to share their experiences with us and to discuss any improvements they would like to see. The proposed date for the focus group to take place is **Wednesday 25 April 2018** from **18:00**. If you are interested in attending, please email enquiries@penistone-gs.uk marking the subject of your email “**Year 8 Parent Focus Group**”.

Possibly one of the best aspects of preparing for a new academic year is getting to know our new students. During the last two weeks of term, Mrs Mason and I have had the privilege of meeting the year 6 students who will become our ‘Class of 2023’, together with their parents and carers. We have lots of exciting things planned as part of their transition journey between now and July and lots of opportunities for our existing students to get involved in helping our new students prepare for life at Penistone Grammar School.

Our ‘Class of 2023’ are a particularly special year group, as this is the first where we will see our student intake increase from 270 to 320. Work is well underway in terms of accommodating the practical aspects of a larger year group. Architects and a Project Management Team have been appointed to work in collaboration with the school in terms of internal remodeling work to create new classrooms and dining space for September 2018. This will be followed by an extension to the school building for September 2019. We will be giving parents the opportunity to come into school and view the plans with us over the coming weeks.

The increased number of students means we also need to appoint new teaching staff ready for September. Despite the reported recruitment crisis in education, we have excellent fields of potentially outstanding candidates for all our current vacancies. This follows a successful recruitment event which took place on Saturday 10 March 2018, attended by over 90 people. I would particularly like to thank the students who gave up their weekend to help on the morning; after meeting our young people, those who attended left inspired, enthused and excited at the prospect of joining our learning community.

When we return after Easter I would appreciate the support of any parents and carers who drop their children at school in the main carpark in a morning. We have noticed that the number of students travelling to school by car has increased and as a result, we need to ensure the conditions in the car park remain safe for everyone. After Easter therefore; we will be introducing a new traffic management system. To support with this, we would ask that any parents who are dropping students off keep to the right as they pull into the main carpark and drive towards the school. Members of staff will then be on hand from 08:00 outside school to direct parents where to drop students off.

As I draw to a close, we have said “goodbye” to some colleagues over the last half-term. Mr Patterson (Teacher of Mathematics) and Mr Gregory (Student Support Officer: Year 10) have both left us to pursue new opportunities. We wish Mr Langton (Teacher of Computing) farewell as he moves on to his next post following



the end of his short-term contract with us. We also send our best wishes to Mrs Brook (Teacher of Geography) who will be taking a short break from PGS as she awaits the arrival of her new baby.

We have also welcomed new colleagues: Mrs Spencer (Student Support Officer: Y8) and Mrs Taylor (Executive Assistant) have taken up posts with us this half term. After Easter they will be joined by Mr Gibbins (our new Vice Principal), Mr Robinson (Teacher of Geography, covering Mrs Brook's maternity leave), Mr Lloyd (Teacher of English), Mr Teasdale (Head of Subject: Computing), Miss Swinden (Teacher of Science) and Mrs Akers (Student Support Officer).

All that remains is for me to wish you all a happy, safe and restful holiday. As always, I remain grateful for the ongoing support you provide to your children and to Penistone Grammar School and I look forward to welcoming our students back to school on Monday 8 April 2018.

Yours sincerely



Paul Crook
Principal

